Formulating special plan for entertainment

†3024. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that even after fifty years of country's Independence, there are 75 crore people who are watching only DD-I channel;

(b) if so, whether Government would consider formulating special plan for the entertainment of such people;

(c) if so, the details thereof and by when it is likely to be implemented; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) In satellite mode, 22 Doordarshan channels are available throughout the country and can be received by using appropriate dish antenna system or through cable network. In terrestrial mode, DDI and DII coverage is available to 89.6% and 35.9% population respectively. This coverage is expected to increase to about 91.3% and 45.5% respectively with the commissioning of the ongoing projects.

(b) and (c) It is the constant endeavour of Doordarshan to expand the coverage in hitherto uncovered areas depending upon availability of funds and inter-se-priorities. With a view to increase coverage, a Special Plan (both AIR & DD) amounting to Rs. 430 crores is already under implementation in Jammu & Kashmir. A Special package for covering North-Eastern States and Sikkim has also been approved in principle. The size and extent of the schemes under this package would depend upon approval of the Expenditure Finance Committee. Alternative technology options are also being considered to cover the hitherto uncovered areas.

Telecast of awareness programmes on dreaded diseases

3025. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

†. Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.